/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

181 888 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

515 576 [264] Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands. But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to

576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/25 cont./

585 as a sort of prediction that she, too, will give birth to a boy. A little later the bride is brought to the separate small house (amhara), and then the real wedding-feast begins.

On the second and third days the relatives come, meet the bride, and bring her presents, each according to his means. When they want to get acquainted with the bride, a friend of hers, her delegate (dade), lifts from her face the veil with which she is covered; the visitors greet the bride, and she, without saying a word, stands erect and quietly, with her eyes lowered. The responses are not made by her, but by her friend. When sufficient time has elapsed after the wedding, /26/ she answers questions addressed to her, but, instead of saying "yes" or "no," she only shakes her head.

The young bride remains in the amhara for some months; [592] then she is invited into the main house, and from this time on the whole care of the household is put on her shoulders. She always tries to satisfy her parents-in-law and to act according to their wishes. For several months she does not speak to anyone; afterwards she begins to speak, first to the younger people in the house and in the village, and later on also to the older ones, and last of all to her parents-in-law. The young bride is referred to by all the villagers as "our daughter-in-law"; they bring her various kinds of sewing-work, which she does without reward.

602 For many years the young couple avoids being seen together by the husband's parents, and they cannot eat together [606] in their presence as long as they live. In conversation with older [264] people, whether relatives or strangers, the wife cannot refer to her husband as "my husband," nor the husband to his wife as "my wife." The daughter-in-law may not sit down on the bench on [606] which her father-in-law or mother-in-law have been seated. [551] The wife can never call her husband by name and in cases of necessity manages instead with the pronouns "you" and "he." In the same way, she does not call by name her brother-in-law, her husband's foster parents, members of the family, the village elders, etc. The husband, on the other hand, only

avoids

/32 cont./

775 knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where,
[766] through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

769 In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-
[764] grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death,
• [264] a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there
769 is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul."
782 Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying:
775 "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we
769 perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead